



'ISA IBN MARIYAM

In this and subsequent Supplements to our Bulletin, we should like to gather a few notes on the Muslim conception of Christ, 'ISA IBN-MARIYAM.

There should be four chapters to this little study:

- I. THE LIFE OF CHRIST ACCORDING TO MUSLIM SOURCES.
- II. THE NATURE OF THE MUSLIM CHRIST.
- III. THE MUSLIM OBJECTIONS TO THE REAL CHRIST.
- IV. HOW TO PRESENT THE REAL CHRIST TO THE MUSLIMS?

We publish this little study by way of supplement so that the pages may be more easily stitched together afterwards in the form of a booklet.

I THE LIFE OF CHRIST ACCORDING TO MUSLIM SOURCES.

The references to Christ are many in Islamic literature. We have no pretention to be exhaustive. We only want to present the popular conception of the Muslim Christ. We shall, therefore, draw His picture from Muslim sources only, and from "official" sources at that, leaving aside for the time being the writings of the Sufis or Mystics of Islam.

The "official," or rather the orthodox sources, we refer to are the Qur'an with its commentaries called *Tafsir*, and the collections of traditions called *Hadith*. But here too we have to limit ourselves. We have of set purpose consulted only the more popular commentaries, viz. the *Tafsir-ul-Baidhawi* and the *Tafsir-ul-Jalalain*, to which we shall refer henceforth as *Baidhawi* and *Jalal* (*Jalalain* is in the dual case because two authors of the same name, *Jalal-ud-Din*, contributed to the book).

To quote serially all the passages of the Qur'an about Christ, would be tedious and somewhat bewildering. We prefer, therefore, to group them under some common headings and, to avoid undue repetitions, we have arranged the verses of each section so as to make a continuous story. After quoting the text of the Qur'an, we explain it basing ourselves on the commentaries mentioned above, and we summarize what the *Hadith* or folklore have added to the sacred text. For the folklore and the *Hadith* we are much indebted to the translation of the QUSUS'AL ANBIYAH published by Samuel M. Zwemer in his *THE MOSLEM CHRIST* (Edinburgh, 1912.)

For reference sake, we first give a synopsis of the Qur'anic text about Christ. The number before the oblique dash is the one of the *surah* or chapter; the numbers after the dash are those of the verses in the Arabic edition of the Qur'an.

I. THE HIDDEN LIFE:

1. The Annunciation to Mary: Qr. 3|42-49a; 19|16-21.
2. The Nativity of Christ: Qr. 19|22-34.
3. The Flight to Egypt: (Qr. 23|50).
4. The Return from Exile: no mention in the Qur'an.

II. THE PUBLIC LIFE:

1. Christ's Miracles: Qr. 3|49b-52; 5|113-118.
2. Christ's Mission and Message: Qr. 57|27-29; 2|87, 253; 3|50; 5|49-50; 6|85; 5|119-120; 61|6.
3. Christ's Crucifixion and Death: Qr. 3|55-58; 4|157-158; 19|33.

III. THE SECOND COMING:

No mention in the Qur'an.

1. THE HIDDEN LIFE :

1. THE ANNUNCIATION TO MARY.

A. THE QUR'AN: Qr. 3|42-49a; 19|16-21.

- 1. Make mention in the Book (the Qur'an) of Mary; when she withdrew from her people to a place, eastward. She put a screen to protect herself from them. Then We sent to her Our Spirit, and he appeared to her in all respects as a man. (19|16-17).
- 2. (He said): "O Mary, verily God hath chosen thee and purified thee and chosen thee above the women of the worlds. O Mary, worship thy Lord devoutly, prostrate thyself and bow (in prayer) with those who bow" (3|42, 43).
- 3. She said: "Lo, I take refuge with the Merciful One from thee; (come not near) if thou dost fear God" (19|18).
- 4. (The Angel said): "O Mary, God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be the Christ (the Messiah) Jesus, Son of Mary; he will be honoured in this world and in the next, and he is of those nearest to God. He shall speak to the people in the cradle and when of mature age, and he will be one of the righteous ones." She said: "O my Lord, how shall have a child when no man has touched me, (3|45-47a) and I am ro harlot" (19|20) ?
- 5. He said: "Even so, God creates what He willeth. When He hath decided a thing, He just saith to it, 'Be' and it is. And He will teach him the Book, and the Wisdom, and the Taurat, and the Indjil, and He will be a messenger to the Banu Israil (to the Tribe of Israel) (3|47b-9a). So will it be! Thy Lord saith: That is easy for Me. And We shall make him a sign unto men and a mercy from Us; behold, this is a matter decreed" (19|21).

Commentary

—1. Inspired probably by the apocryphal *PROTEVANGELIUM SANCTI JACOBI*, Muslim tradition made the child Mary live in the Temple in the charge of Zacharias. She used to be fed by Angels. One day she retired *eastward*, that is probably to a room on the eastern side of the Temple; there she *screened* herself off to make her ablutions, says Baidhawi.—(We beg forbearance for the crudity of some of the details

which we quote from Muslim commentators. Al Baidhawi especially; they will help us to penetrate deeper into Muslim mentality. Let us not believe, however, that crudity is meant, in the minds of their authors, to be disparaging either to Christ or to Mary; they only want to explain how things must have happened!)

Whilst Mary was in that eastern room, God sent to her His *Spirit*. That Spirit is not the Holy Ghost, but only the Angel Gabriel, the accredited angelic messenger of God. He appeared to Mary in the shape of a *man*, young, of beautiful countenance and social manners; he spoke to the Virgin with calculated familiarity, Muslim commentators emphasizing the anthropomorphism of the scene.

—2. God *hath purified* thee from "the touch of men" says Jalal; from "monthly courses" comments Baidhawi. But the real meaning must be much deeper than that; for it is related in the Hadith of Al-Bukhari (Transl. Houdas, vol. III, p. 278-279) that every child coming into this world is touched by Satan, but Mary and her Son were by God's special favour exempted from that touch.

—4. The *speaking in the cradle* is a detail borrowed from some apocryphal gospel, probably the one of the INFANCY OF CHRIST (see below).

Jesus son of Mary.—The Angel speaking to Mary calls Jesus "Ibn Mariyam." This appellation is to be noted, as it is contrary to the received custom of the Arabs. A child is always called after the name of his father (*ibn talis patris*) not of his mother. But the expression "*'Isa ibn Mariyam*" is here used, wisely explains Baidhawi, to call the attention to the fact that Jesus is to be born without human father.

Honoured in this world and in the next: in this world because he will hold the dignity of a prophet; in the next because he will have the right of intercession (Baidhawi).

A Word from Him (kalimat). This important expression will be discussed in a next chapter.

—5. The *Book* to be given to Christ by God, may mean either the Holy Scriptures in general, the divine revelation which Muslim always picture as written in a Book kept close to God's throne, or simply the art of writing.

This is a matter decreed.—Commentators give elaborate explanations of these words. We condense a little what Jalal writes: "Et Gabriel issufflavit in . . . eam et sentiit (Virgo) quasi se concepisse in utero."

B. TRADITION.

We consider the Hadith under a separate heading, but we take the word in a very broad sense. Much of traditional matter is given in the various commentaries of the Qur'an. The source we use here, the QUSUS AL-ANBIYAH, is not itself an authentic record of *hadith*, but it is based on reliable tafsir and hadith; it is a popular book with Muslims.

The QUSUS differs somewhat from the explanation given above which is from Jalal and Baidhawi. According to the QUSUS, Mary and her cousin Joseph were living in the Temple on Mount Zion; they used to go daily together to fetch water from a nearby fountain. One day Mary ran short of water and had to return alone to the fountain where she met the Angel. The Angel addressed her in the words recorded in the Qur'an.

2. THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST.

A. THE QUR'AN. Qr. 19|22-34.

- 1. "So she had conceived him, and she retired with him to a place far away. "The birth-pangs drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree; she cried: Ah! would that I had died before this and been entirely forgotten!"

- 2. "But he called to her from beneath her: "Grieve not! for thy Lord hath provided a rivulet beneath thee;
 "And shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm-tree; it will drop for thee dates ripe and fresh.
 "Eat then and drink and be of good cheer, and if thou seest any man, say:
 "Verily I have vowed a fast to God the Merciful, and I shall not this day talk with anyone."
- 3. "Then she brought him (the child) to her people carrying him (in her arms). They said: "O Mary, Thou bringest there a strange thing!"
 "O Sister of Aaron, thy father was no evil man nor thy mother a harlot!"
- 4. "And she pointed to the child. They said: "How can we talk with an infant in the cradle?"
 "He said: I am God's servant. He hath given me the book and made me a Prophet."
 "And he hath made me blessed wheresoever I may be, and He hath enjoined on me Prayer and Aimsiving as long as I live."
 "And He hath made me dutiful towards my mother and not overbearing or miserable."
 "And so peace is on me the day I was born and the day I shall die and the day that I shall be raised up again to life."

Commentary.

—1. The above story is taken partly from apocryphal gospels, more especially from the EVANGELIUM PSEUDO-MATTHAEI and the EVANGELIUM NATIVITATIS MARIAE. But in these gospels, the affair of the palm-tree is usually connected with the flight into Egypt. Mary, tired of the journey, rests for a while at the foot of a high palm-tree. She expresses the wish of eating of its fruit; but Joseph points out the height of the tree, and regrets his inability to get at the dates; thereupon the Child Jesus orders the tree to bow. It obeys, and Mary plucks dates. The Child then commands a spring to shoot forth from the roots of the tree, and so it does. (Evang. Pseudo-Matt. c. XX).

—2. The one who called from beneath her or from behind the palm-tree according to others, was either Jesus himself, or the Angel Gabriel.

"I have vowed a fast." This passage makes difficulty. Mary is ordered to eat and drink, and at the same time to give as reason for her silence that she has vowed to fast. Some get out of the difficulty by saying that the meal Mary was enjoying was to be as a preparation to the fast! Jalal, however, prefers to think that the abstinence vowed is of words: she will not speak to any one of her state, nor try to justify herself, leaving the matter to God. The Child, therefore, defended its Mother.

—3. The words "O sister of Aaron" addressed to Mary are often quoted by non-Muslim writers as a sample of anachronism in the Qur'an, and they make fun of it. But the anachronism may be only apparent and modern Muslim apologists explain the epithet as meaning that Mary was of the Family of Aaron; it must be understood in the same way as the expression, "Jesus, Son of David" i.e. of the family of David.

—4. The speaking in the cradle is taken from the ARABIC GOSPEL OF THE INFANCY (c. II). Jesus would have said: "I am Jesus the son of God, the Word, that you have borne, . . . and my Father has sent me to save the world." The main trend of the story is to justify Mary in the eyes of the people and prove the virginal birth of Christ.

From the Qur'anic account of the nativity, it looks very much as if the birth of Christ had followed the conception very soon. The birth-pangs seem to take hold of

Mary as she is retiring to a far-away place. In fact some commentators, like our Jalal, think that the conception, the coming to term, and the birth have all happened within an hour of the annunciation; but Baidhawi says that the opinions are divided about this point; some people speak of one hour, others of anything between six and nine months. The age of the Virgin was between 10 and 13 years.

B. TRADITION

Some traditions make Jesus to be born not at the foot of the palm-tree, as is implied in the Qur'an text, but in a cave where Joseph had taken Mary when she was with child. They stayed 40 days in that cave, during which time Jesus was born. When they left the cave, the Child said to Mary: "All Hail! because I am the servant of God and His Messiah!"

3. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

A. THE QUR'AN.

There is no clear mention in the Qur'an of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt. But some see a reference to it in the following verse:

"We made the son of Mary and his Mother a sign; and we gave them both a shelter in a lofty spot, quiet and watered with springs" (Qr. 23, v. 50).

Commentary.

Muslim Commentators are divided as to the meaning of this verse. Mary and her child are a sign of God's power since the child's conception was miraculous. But the *shelter in a lofty spot* creates difficulties. It may be either Jerusalem, or Damascus, or Palestine, says Jalal-ud-Din. Baidhawi adds Ramlah in Palestine or Egypt.

B. TRADITION

In the STORIES OF THE PROPHETS (Qusus'al-Anbiyah) the above verse is interpreted as referring to the flight into Egypt. Herod planned to kill the child, but an Angel informed Joseph of it and ordered him to Egypt with Mary and the child. "Then Joseph put Mary and his son upon a donkey which he had, until they came to Egypt, and this was the place which God spoke of in His book? . . . "Mary remained in Egypt twelve years, spinning cotton and gleaned after the reapers. And it is related that: When Jesus was born and He was one day old, it was as though he was one month's old; and when he was nine months old, His mother took him by the hand and led Him to the school . . ." and he astonished the teacher and all by his extraordinary wisdom. (Zwemer op. cit. p. 66).

4. THE RETURN FROM EGYPT

A. THE QUR'AN. No mention.

B. TRADITION:

After twelve years, Herod died and God revealed it to Mary. He ordered her to return to Syria with Joseph. They settled down at Nazareth from which place the Christians got their name *Nasara*.

At Nazareth "Jesus used to learn in one hour the knowledge of one day, and in one day the knowledge of one month, and in one month the knowledge of one year."

The origin of these stories is evident. They are culled from the many apocryphal writings that were current in the Near East at the beginning of Islam.

II. THE PUBLIC LIFE

1. CHRIST'S MIRACLES

A. THE QUR'AN. Qr. 3|49b-52; 5|113-118.

- 1. And God will teach him the Book and the Wisdom and the Taurat and the Indjil; and he will be a messenger to the Banu Israil (3|48, 49a).
- 2. (He will say:) "Verily it is Allah who is my Lord and your Lord. Worship Him, then. This is the straight way (3|51)!"
- 3. "Behold I have come to you with a sign from your Lord. Behold, I am going to create for you the figure of a bird out of clay, and I shall blow on it and, with God's permission it will be a real bird! And I shall heal the born blind and the lepers and I shall quicken the dead with God's permission. And I shall tell you what you eat, and what you store up in your houses. Surely in all this there is a sign for you, if you have Faith. (3|49).
- 4. When Jesus noticed that they did not believe, he said: "Who will be my helpers to God (to do God's work)." The Apostles replied: "We are God's helpers. We believe in God. Do thou testify that we have surrendered ourselves to God (that we are Muslims)." (3|52).
- 5. When the Apostles asked: "O Jesus, son of Mary, would your Lord be able to send down for us from heaven a furnished table? "He said: "Fear God if you are believers!" (5|115).
- 6. They replied: "We wish to eat from it and satisfy our hearts. We shall then know that you told us the truth and we shall witness to it," (5|116).
- 7. Jesus the son of Mary said: "O God our Lord; send down to us from heaven a furnished table that there may be for us all, the first and the last, a solemn festival and a sign from Thee. And do provide for us, O Thou the best of providers." (5|117).
- 8. God said: "I shall surely send it down to you. But, if after that any of you still disbelieve, well I shall punish him with such a punishment as I have punished no one so far in all the worlds." (5|118).
- 9. (And God—on the last day—will say to Jesus: Remember:) "How I restrained from you the Banu Israil when you went to them with clear proofs. And those among them who did not believe, exclaimed: "This is nothing but manifest magic!" (5|113c).

Commentary:

The Qur'an does not describe in details the miracles of Christ, but gives only a broad summary of them, somewhat after the answer of Christ to the disciples of John.

1. *Banu Isra'il* is usually translated: the "*children of Israel*"; but although the translation may be literally exact, it cannot have had, in the mind of Muhammad, the connotation often implied in the expression by Christian writers. We have kept the name as it stands in the Arabic text, and we understand it to mean "the Tribe of Israel," the Jews, as *Banu'l-Kalb* is the "Tribe of Kalb" not "the children of the Dog."

Baidhawi remarks that this verse restricts the mission of Christ, to the Banu Isra'il; this to refute those who give to Christ a universal Mission, the exclusive privilege of Muhammad.

—2. *Allah* is the Lord. Christ is made to proclaim what will be also Muhammad's message. Allah is here opposed to the other deities of the Arabs of the Jahiliya (see Notes on Islam, I, p. 53 fil.) We have inverted the sequence of the verses, because the supremacy of Allah is the core of the prophetic message; the miracles are confirmatory *signs*.

—3. The miracle of the *birds* is manifestly taken from the EVANGELIUM PSEUDO-MATTHAEI or the Arabic EVANGELIUM INFANTIAE (c. 36, 46). The child Jesus made birds of clay on a Sabbath day, for which he was rebuked by Joseph. The child then clapped his hands and the birds flew away.

With God's permission.—The expression comes back like a refrain, (comp. the parallel passage in 5[113]) to indicate, comments Baidawi, that it is God and not Jesus that gives life. To give life is a divine privilege.

The *blind* and the *lepers*.—Jesus, says Jalal, would cure up to fifty thousand in one day by his prayer provided they believed. Baidhawi adds that if the sick were unable to come to him, Jesus would go to them.

Quicken the dead.—Jalal mentions some of the dead so quickened: Jesus' friend 'Azar (Lazarus), the son of the old woman (the widow of Naim), the daughter of the Dime-collector, Sam the son of Noah, etc.

What you eat . . .—Richard Bell translates "What you may eat . . . and may store up," but the idea of permission is surely not in the Arabic. He may have been influenced by the verse immediately following the present one where Christ "allows certain things formerly forbidden to the Jews!"—Baidhawi understands our verse as meaning that Christ had the power of divination.

—4. *Helpers to God.*—An obscure verse. Does this verse refer to the Call of the apostles by Christ? It may be implied in the reply, although commentators do not mention this interpretation.

—5-7. *The miracle of the Table.*—A strange legend that seems to borrow details from different misunderstood events of the N.T.: the Lord's Supper, the feeding of the multitude, or Peter's vision at Joppe!

The Apostles' request sounds strangely like the one of the Jews in the desert (Ps. 77, v. 19): "And they spoke ill of God; they said: Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?"

According to Jalal, the Angels brought down the table and on it there were seven loaves of bread and seven fishes, and the Apostles ate until they had their fill. But there are many different opinions as to what was on the table; some say two loaves, others twelve, others all sorts of viands . . .

—9. God *restrained* the Jews from killing Christ, says Jalal. This may refer to Luke iv, 28-29 when the people of Nazareth wanted to do away with Jesus, or to the coming passion, and death on the Cross, from which according to Muslims, Christ was preserved.

B. TRADITION.

Tradition and folklore have added considerably to the list of miracles discretely mentioned in the Qur'an. The sources of these accounts are obvious; they are the apocryphal gospels and the stories that went round the little educated Christian communities of the Near East and Arabia. We group those miracles without commentary.

1. *The Miracles Jesus performed as a boy.*

1. He spoke in the cradle.

2. He ordered a palm-tree to lower its branches that his Mother might pluck dates; and made a spring come forth from beneath the tree.
3. He made birds out of clay and made them fly away with a clap of the hands. (Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, c. 36 . . .)
4. Whilst in Egypt, at the age of 12, he revealed to a farmer who had stolen the latter's treasure. (Various versions of the same story where a blind man and a lame man work together.)
5. He revealed to his playmates what their parents were eating at home.
6. He brought back to life a playmate killed in course of a game that he might testify to Jesus' innocence.
7. He restored to life a child that had fallen from a roof. (Gospel of St. Thomas, c. 9.)
8. As an apprentice dyer, he obtained several colours with one die to the great astonishment of the dyer. (Comp. Arabic Gospel of the Infancy c. 37.)

II. *The Miracles Jesus performed during His public life.*

1. He healed the blind from birth and the lepers.
2. He brought back some dead to life: see above under "Quicken the dead."

Here are some more details about those resurrections:

- (a) The bringing back to life of the son of an old woman begins with the story of how Christ got that youngman married to the daughter of a tyrant by giving him a castle of gold. But the youngman, struck by the poverty and detachment of Christ, gave up everything and followed Him. He eventually died in the company of Christ, and was then brought back to life.
- (b) The rising of Sem happened in this way. Jesus was describing Noah's ark; but his disciples did not believe his word. They wanted the testimony of someone who had seen the ark. So Jesus went to a small hill nearby where was the tomb of Sem the son of Noah and he called him out. On coming out of the tomb, Sem cried: "Is this Resurrection Day?" He was told it was not yet, but that he had to testify about the ark; he did so, and Jesus ordered him to die again.
- (c) The prophet Ezra was also brought out of his tomb although with some difficulty because the lid of the coffin had got jammed. Jesus had some water poured on it and then things worked smoothly. Ezra testified that Jesus was the servant of God and His apostle, and he died again.
- 3. Jesus revealed hidden secrets and what people ate and what they kept in their houses . . .
- 4. Jesus walked on water.
- 5. He brought down a furnished table from heaven. See Qur'an. There are many versions of this miracle. Here is one summarized.

The disciples wanted a table to come down furnished from heaven. Christ prayed a while and lo, a table was lowered down from heaven. All the bystanders were taken besides themselves by the fragrance of the food. A cloth was hiding the food from view; on removing the cloth an enormous broiled fish appeared with condiments and vegetables. The apostles were not satisfied yet and wanted that a new miracle should be made. Jesus, therefore, brought the fish to life and it began to shake itself violently on the dish. Everybody was so scared that Jesus told the fish to return to its broiled state; which he did. Then Jesus told the people to eat; the poor, the lame, the sick came to eat and were healed, but other people refused to eat and during the night 350 of them were turned into swines; they died after three days!

2. CHRIST'S MISSION AND MESSAGE.

A. *THE QUR'AN*.—Qr. 57|26-29; 2|87, 252; 3|50; 5|49-50; 6|85; 5|118-120; 61|6.

- 1. We did send of old Noah and Abraham and established in their posterity the prophetship and the Book (57|26a); we gave the Book to Moses, then, we had him followed up by (other) messengers (2|87a).
- 2. In their footsteps we sent Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming what of the Taurah had been revealed before him (5|49a). We gave Jesus clear proofs and we strengthened him with the holy Spirit (2|87b).
- 3. And we gave him the Indjil wherein are guidance and light, confirming what of the Taurah had been revealed before; it is a guidance and an exhortation to those who fear God (5|49b).
- 4. (Remember) when Jesus the son of Mary said: "O Banu Israil! Truly I am God's messenger to you (61|6) to certify what of the Taurah had been revealed before me, and to make permissible to you some of the things which were forbidden to you before. I have come to you with a sign from your Lord. Fear God, then, and obey me (3|50). It is Allah (God) who is my Lord and your Lord; therefore worship him. This is a straight path!" (3|51).
- 5. (Remember when Jesus said: "I am sent) to give glad tidings of a messenger to come after me whose name is Ahmad."—But when he came to them with clear proofs, they said: "This is evident sorcery!" (61|6bc).
- 6. And behold when God will say: "O Jesus, the son of Mary, was it you who said to men, 'Take me and my Mother as two gods besides Allah (God) ?'"
He will say: "Glory be to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right (to say) (other translation: what I know to be untrue). If I had said such a thing, surely Thou wouldst have known it; for, Thou knowest what is in my heart, though I know not what is in Thine. Thou art, indeed, the Knower of secret things (5|119)."
- 7. I did not say to them aught except what Thou didst command me to say, "Worship Allah (God), my Lord and your Lord!" And I gave testimony before them as long as I stayed in their midst. And when Thou didst cause me to die (other translation): when Thou didst take me up). Thou wert the guardian over them, and Thou art a witness to all things (5|120).
- 8. And we placed in the hearts of those who follow him, kindness and mercy. As to monasticism—we did not prescribe it for them—they invented it only in search of God's good pleasure; but they did not look after it with due care. On those of them, however, who believed, we granted their reward; but many of them are transgressors (57|27bc).
- 9. Let the followers of the Indjil judge by what God revealed in it. And whoever does not judge by what God has revealed, it is they (*sic*) who wander astray (5|50).
- 10. O ye that believe, fear God and believe in His messenger and He will bestow on you a double share of His mercy; He will provide for you a light to walk by and forgive you (your faults), for God is a merciful forgiver (57|28).

- 11. That the people of the Book may know that they have no power at all over God's bounty, and that the bounty is in God's hands. He bestows it on whosoever He wills. God is the master of immense bounty (57|29).
- 12. And Zakariya and John and Jesus and Elias; all are among the righteous (6|85).

Commentary

—1. The *posterity* to which the gift of prophecy was entrusted is partly detailed in Qr. 2|136 quoted below. Muslim popular theology has tried to find out how many "prophets" there had been in the world and discovered 124,000 of them, but only eight were real *rasul* (messenger, apostle) to whom a revealed book (*kitab*) or at least a few pages (*suhuf*) had been sent down by God: Adam, Seth, Idris (Enoch?), Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad.

The *Book* (*al-Kitab*) stands here for Holy Scriptures in general, i.e. whatever divine revelation had been written down (*kitab*: anything written). Of this written revelation only four specific books remain. They are, according to Jalal, the Taurah, the Zubur, the Indjil, the Furqan (the Qur'an).

Muhammad taught that all the books and all the prophets are equally to be believed in: "Say ye: 'We believe in God and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord: we make no difference between one and another of them: and we bow to God in Islam.'" (Qr. 2|136, transl. A. Yusuf Ali).

The *messengers* who came between Moses and Jesus were 4000.

2. The *Taurah*—from the Hebrew *torah*, "The Law" (see A. Jeffery. The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an, Baroda 1938, p. 95f.)—is the usual name given by Muslims to the books revealed to Moses, the "Pentateuch." But in the Qur'an *Taurah* may as a rule be understood to mean the Jewish Scriptures in general. Of course, the original *Taurah*, the original revelation is no more extant; the records of it according to Muslims have been falsified by the Jews to suit their ends (Qr. 3|78; 4|46).

When Christ came, he *confirmed* the *Taurah*. To confirm the revelation already in existence is done by every new Prophet coming into this world (we speak of the "prophets" referred to in the Qur'an); it is part of his mission, and a guarantee that he remains in the line of the prophets mentioned above (sub (-1)). Muhammad also is said to have "confirmed" what had been revealed before him: "To thee we sent the Book (the Scriptures) in truth confirming the Scripture that came before it" (Qr. 5|51; comp. Qr. 6|84-86).

The *clear proofs* (*baianat*) Jesus gave, are the miracles he performed (Badhawī, Jalal), more especially the raising of the dead, the cleansing of the lepers, the healing of the blind (see above JESUS' MIRACLES, pp. 6-8).

The *holy Spirit* which strengthened Jesus, is literally the "Spirit of Holiness" (*bi ruhi'l-qudusi*), but in the sense of the holy Spirit, says Baidhawī, i.e. the Angel Gabriel. The strengthening Spirit of Jesus has for attribution to keep him pure (*li-taharatihi*) from the touch of Satan and to endear him to God: for this reason it is coupled to his soul. Some Muslim exegetes think that here "Spirit" means the Indjil, or the name of God by which Jesus used to raise the dead (Baidhawī, *Tafsir* p. 81).

—3. The *Indjil* or *Andjil* (see Baidhawi), is evidently a corruption of the Greek EUANGELION (Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an* p. 71). It comes 12 times in the Qur'an in passages which belong all either to Medinan surahs or to late Meekkan 3|3, 48, 65; 5|49, 50, 69, 71, 113; 7|157; 9|111; 48|29; 57|27.

Indjil or Gospel is properly the heavenly message communicated by Jesus to the Jews and later on consigned to writing. It confirms all previous teaching; it is a guidance to men (3|3), the basis of belief and of salvation: "O People of the Book, ye have no ground to stand upon unless ye stand fast by the Law (Taurah) the Gospel, and all revelation that has come to you from your Lord" (5|71). It was taught by God to Jesus (3|18) (also 9|111); it is a light for men and an admonition for those who fear God (5|49). God places in the hearts of those who follow it compassion and mercy (57|27).

The Gospel is, at least in one passage, spoken of as on a level not only with other Scriptures, but even with the Qur'an (3|3): "It is He Who sent down to thee in truth, the BOOK, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Taurah and the Indjil before it (the Qur'an), as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the Furqan (the Qur'an)".

But Muhammad having claimed the authority of the Gospel to justify his mission (the promise of the Consoler: Jo 14|16), and the Christians apparently denying that Christ had ever announced Muhammad's coming, the Prophet is said to have accused the Christians of having wantonly altered, corrupted, their Scriptures. The same was said to the Jews about their own Scriptures.

It would be interesting to know what exactly Muhammad meant by *Indjil*, what he understood the "Gospel" to be. Had he at hand an authentic Arabic version of the canonical Gospels? There surely were early translations of the canonical Gospels into Arabic from the Greek, the Syriac and the Coptic; the Vatican possesses the manuscript of such a translation dating from the VIII century and "according to Barhebraeus, there was a still older translation made between 631 and 640 by the monophysite patriarch Joannes by order of an Arab prince, 'Amr ibn Sa'd" (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II, 502: *Indjil*).

From the meagre qur'anic references to Christ and His teaching, we must conclude that Muhammad had no knowledge of the canonical Gospels. The qur'anic picture of Christ is drawn from data culled out of apocryphal writings or from the sayings of little literate, docetic, Christians. Yet it would be enlightening to know of which apocryphal Gospel Muhammad was the debtor; was it of the Proto-evangelium Jacobi, or of the Gospel of the Twelve Apostles, or of Barnabas, or of the Infancy . . . ? All seem to come in somehow (Cheikho: *Quelques legendes islamiques*, Beyrouth, 1910, p. 43).

—4. Jesus gives himself as *God's messenger* to the Banu Israil, and the expression used, *Rasulullahi*, is the one which is currently applied also to Muhammad and to the few messengers mentioned above sub (—1).

To certify has not in the passage quoted a final meaning "in order to certify," but is merely attributive "certifying" (*musaddiqan*). *To make permissible*, however, is used with a final meaning "so that, in order to" (*li-uhilla*); but in the Arabic text it does not depend on an expressed principal verb. The way we have coupled this passage with Qr. 61|6 seems logical and in keeping with Muslim exegesis (See Baidhawi, *ad l.*).

The things which were forbidden "in the Law of Moses; such as the suet, the fat about the entrails, fish, camel's flesh and work on the sabbath-day. This shows that his Code superseded that of Moses. This does not prevent its 'confirming the Law,' just as the fact that parts of the Qur'an supersede each other does not make it self-contradicting, self-destructive; for 'superseding' in reality means explanation, and specification of the time to which a command applies" (Baidhawi, transl. Margoliouth in *Chrestomathia Baidawiana*, p. 38).

The sign brought, says Baidhawi, is the attestation which follows: "It is Allah who is my Lord and your Lord"; but it may refer also to some miracle not mentioned here.

The expression "*my Lord and your Lord*" is interesting from the Christian point view, as it reminds us of similar expressions in the canonical Gospels, but the opposition between my Lord and yours seems not to have struck Muslim commentators nay, it probably implies a denial of Christ's divinity: God is my Lord as well as yours.

The emphasis placed on "It is Allah (God) who is my Lord" (Inn'Allaha) was surely intentional. Jesus is made to affirm the superiority of Allah over other gods (the Mekkans had several; see NOTES ON ISLAM, vol. I, pp. 33, 54). Muhammad then is in the right way when he too claims supremacy for Allah and his absolute unity. There is no God but Allah.

—5. *The glad tidings of a messenger to come after me whose name shall be Ahmad.* These are portentous words no doubt and modern Muslim writers often use them to prove the exalted mission of Muhammad. Here is a commentary, on the verse by A. Yusuf Ali (it is sober in tones): "*Ahmad*, or *Muhammad*, the Praised One, is almost a translation of the Greek word *Periclutos*. In the present Gospel of John, xiv, 16, xv, 26, and xvi, 7, the word 'Comforter' in the English version is for the Greek word *Paracletos*, which means '*Advocate*,' 'one called to the help of an other, a kind of friend,' rather than 'Comforter.' Our doctors (the Muslims) contend that *Paracletos* is a corrupt reading for *Periclutos*, and that in their original saying of Jesus there was a prophecy of our holy Prophet *Ahmad* by name. Even if we read *Paraclete*, it would apply to the Holy Prophet who is 'a Mercy for all creatures' (xxi, 107) and 'most kind and merciful to the Believers' (ix, 128). (The Holy Qur'an, text, transl., and comment. by A. Yusuf Ali, Lahore, p. 1540, footnote n. 5438).

The bearing of this verse is so important that it must be studied in some details. We must try to trace the origin of the strange prophecy attributed to Christ and of the alleged corruption of the Greek text of St. John's Gospel where the coming of the *Paraclete* is announced.

The explanation of the Muslim Divines that the *Paracletos* of the Christian Scriptures should read *periclutos* is critically untenable. An alteration of so capital a word could not have passed unnoticed, and it would be surprising that the four passages of St. John's Gospel in which *Paracletos* is found, would have been consistently changed in all the extant manuscripts of the Gospel into *periclutos*! Now there is no variant recorded for the word *Paracletos* of Jo. 14|16, 16; 15|26; 16|7. As to *periclutos* it does not come once in the whole New Testament.

And even if *periclutos* had been used by St. John, it could in no way be rendered in Arabic by *Ahmad*. *Periclutos* means "easy to hear, very illustrious," whilst *Ahmad*, of the same root as *Muhammad*, means: "the much praised one." The equivalent of *Ahmad* in Greek might be *epainetos* or *eulogemenos*, not *periclutos*, and, of course, still less *Paracletos*.

Then, besides a mere literal translation of St. John's Promised One (whether it were *Paracletos* or *periclitos*), the connotation of the word and the context in which it is used, should have been taken into account by the Muslim Divines. The One Christ announces is to be a "truth-giving Spirit" which "cannot be seen by the world," and which will "dwell continually" with men . . . etc. All this evidently cannot be applied to *Ahmad*.

The Muslim explanation regarding the alteration by Christians of *periclitos* into *Paracletos*, seems to be much posterior to Muhammad's times. The early commentators of the Qur'an, who in many respects are also the standard ones, when commenting on Qr. 61/6, acknowledge no doubt the existence of a prophecy concerning the advent of Muhammad "the seal of the Prophets," but they seem to ignore entirely the *periclitos* affair. Had they known it they would surely have spoken of it, some of them at least, for as a rule they are fond of saying all that they know about the verses they explain. Reference may be made to the following six authoritative commentaries:

- (1) Al-Tabari (†A. H. 310|A.D. 923): *Jamr'ul-bayan fi tafsir al-Quran*, vol. 28, p. 33.
- (2) Al-Zamakhshari (†A. H. 538|A.D. 1143): *Al Kashshaf*, vol. 4, p. 190.
- (3) Al-Baidhawi (†A. H. 685|A.D. 1286): *Anwar'ul-Tanzil* (ed. H. O. Fleischer. Commentarius in Coranum, Lipsiae, 1846, vol. II, p. 330).
- (4) Al-Nasafi (†A. H. 710|A.D. 1310): *Madarak'ul-Tanzil*, vol. 4, p. 190.
- (5) Al-Khazin (†A. H. 741|A.D. 1340): *Lubab'ul-Ta'wil*, vol. 7, p. 71.
- (6) Jalalain (†A. H. 864|A.D. 1459 and A. H. 911|A.D. 1505): *Tafsir*, vol. 2, p. 305.

All the above mentioned books except No. 3 were published at Cairo. The references to the pages may vary with the different editions, but a Muslim acquainted with Arabic will easily plot the verse in question, Qr. 61/6.

The Muslim Divines of the *periclitos* base their argumentation—unknowingly perhaps—on a fake apocryphal gospel attributed to Barnabas, of which the only extant copy is an Italian manuscript of the XIV or XVth century. This "Gospel of Barnabas" has nothing in common with the Greek Apocryphal Gospel of the same name mentioned in the Gelasian Catalogue; it is the work of an Italian who was converted to Islam and who wrote a book trying to prove from the canonical Gospels that Muhammad is the Messiah and Jesus his forerunner (Vigouroux, Dictionnaire de la Bible, I, col. 1466; Pirot, Supplement au Dict. de la Bible, I, col. 480).

The fake GOSPEL OF BARNABAS was carefully studied by Lonsdale and Laura Ragg (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1907). In the Introduction to their book the Authors write (p. xxxi): "In the Italian text of *Barnabas* the reference (to the Paraclete) is no clearer than that in the text of the Koran so vague, in fact, as to be unrecognizable. In one place, when about to reveal the name 'Machometo' to the High Priest, Jesus is made to say 'il nome del messia le *adminabile*;' but in the passage where the Arabic glossator has seen a reference to the Paraclete the phrase is 'une splendeur.' The gloss in question is sufficiently confused. It makes "splendeur" equivalent to the Arabic "Ahmad," but also to the Hebrew "Messiah," the Latin "Consolator," and the Greek "Paracletos"."

From the study by L. L. Ragg may be concluded that the fake GOSPEL OF BARNABAS is an original work written in Italian, and not a translation from the Arabic as thought Bernard de la Mirmoye (*Animadversiones ad Menagianam*, Amsterdam, 1716 t. iv, p. 321) quoted by Vigouroux (*l.c.*) "All available evidence points to an author nurtured in Latin Christianity of the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, one whose knowledge of the Christian Scriptures is considerably in advance of his familiarity with the Scriptures of Islam: presumably therefore he was a renegade from Christianity." (The Paraclete or Muhammad, by L. Bevan Jones in *THE MOSLEM WORLD*, vol. X, 1919, p. 118, footnote).

From the arguments brought forward above, we may safely conclude that the word "Ahmad" of Qr. 61|6 is not an Arabic translation of the name given by Christ to the one who was to come after Him, the Paraclete.

But there is more! Who is that Ahmad of Qr. 61|6? Here is an unusual name for the Prophet of the Arabs, even if it is of the same root and has much the same meaning as Muhammad (Muhammad: the praised one; Ahmad: the more praised).

To solve the difficulty some scholars (Sprenger, Hirschfeld) have pretended that Ahmad was the real name of Allah's messenger and that he had taken the name Muhammad only when in Medina with the idea of presenting himself as the Messiah of Jewish expectation. It is said, indeed, that in the Talmud and in the Midrash, the Messiah is not rarely called *Manahema* (acc. to Levy Neuhebr, Worterbuch III, 153), quoted by Th. Noeldeke, Geschichte des Qorans, I. p. 9 footnote). The name Muhammad would suggest *Manahema*! But all this does not sound very likely. In the oldest documents concerning Islam—like the early treatises diplomatic correspondence, etc. the Prophet is always called Muhammad, never Ahmed. The lonely passage where Muhammad is called Ahmad seems to be Qr. 61|6.

This would already justify partly Hartwig Hirschfeld's suspicion viz. that "the genuineness of this verse (Qr. 61|6) is not beyond doubt." (New Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Quran, London, 1902, p. 140). The suspicion would be further corroborated if we could check our present verse on a pre-Uthmanic Qur'an (see NOTES ON ISLAM, vol. II, p. 43). The pre-Uthmanic, original text of the Qur'an has not yet been established, but a certain amount of materials has already been gathered to that effect. Now in an old primary codex compiled by Dr. A. Jeffery, the phrase "*wa Ismuhu Ahmad*" (his name shall be Ahmad) is not found. The codex is the one of Ubai ibn Ka'b (died A.H. 29 or 34), one of the Ansar and for a time Muhammad's secretary so well versed in the knowledge of the Qur'an that he deserved to be styled *Sayyid al-Qurra'*. This codex was destroyed by the orders of Khalif Uthman after his official recension (A. Jeffery: Materials for the History of the Qur'an Leiden, 1937, p. 114, 115). But through much labour, tit-bits of the original text were gleaned from various reliable sources, and a table of variants drawn up. We juxtapose here below the actual text of the Qur'an and the one of the Variant:

Text of the Qur'an

(Inni) rasulu'llahi ilaikum
musaddiqan lima baina yadaiya min al
wa mubashshiran bi-rasulin ya'ti min
ba'di

Taurati

Ismuhu Ahmadu . .

(Truly) I am God's messenger to you
Confirming what of the Taurat was re-
vealed before me

And announcing a messenger that will
come after me

His name is Ahmad . . :

Text of Codex Ubai

(Inni) rasulu'llahi ilaikum
wa ubashshirukum bi-nabiyyin.-

Ummatuhu akhiru'l-umami,
Yakhtumu'llahu bihi al-anbiya
wa, l-rusula . . (Jeffery, op. c. p. 17).

(Truly) I am God's messenger to you
And I announce to you a prophet.
His nation is the last of nations
And with him God will seal (put and
end to) the line of the prophets and
the messengers.

It will be noticed that Codex Ubai omits the mention of Ahmad and that it is a *nabi* (mere prophet), not a *rasul* (messenger, apostle); there is no reference either to confirming the Taurah, but that prophet will be the "seal of Prophets," an explanation which is found in some of the commentators referred to above, v.g., Al-Baidhawi.

The text of Codex Ubai does not apply so clearly to Muhammad as the present Qur'an text, and might well be understood of the Paraclete for there is a manifest stop after *bi-nabiyin*. The force of the qur'anic argument that Christ foretold Muhammad by name is considerably weakened.

Now, it would be interesting to find out how Muhammad came to know of Jo. 14|16 and the promise of the Paraclete.

According to Mr. F. C. Burkitt, a palaeographer of Cambridge, the Aramaic speaking Christians of Palestine were using a Syriac version of the Gospels at the time of Muhammad, in which *Paracletos* was translated *manahmana*. Now the first biographer of Muhammad quoting freely John 15|26 used the word *al-manahmani* for *parakletos* (Sirat'ul-Rasul, 3 vol. ed. phd. 1329 A.H. Vol. I, pp. 223-3) and explained: "*al manahmana* in Syriac is Mohammed, and in Greek *al baraqalitas*" (L. Bevan Jone, op. c. p. 119).

Eager to find his Mission sanctioned by Holy Scripture, it is not difficult to conceive that Muhammad was ready to see in the Syriac rendering of John 15|26 and other allied passages a reference to himself.

In this connection it may be interesting to recall that in the 2d. century Montanus also had applied to himself Christ's promise of the Paraclete, and so had in the 3d. century Mani the founder of Manichaeism . . .

But when he came to them with clear signs, they said: "This is evident sorcery!" It is not clear to whom the pronoun "he" refers, whether to Jesus or to Muhammad. Al-Nasafi does not take side; nor does Al-Khazin. Baidhawi seems to think it rather refers to Jesus; but Jalal stands for Muhammad. If "he" refers to Jesus, then the *clear signs* are those referred to above sub (—2); if "he" refers to Muhammad, the *clear signs* cannot be his miracles since he disclaimed the power of working any, but the signs (*ayat*) to which he so often appealed, signs from nature, his doctrine, etc. But both Jesus and Muhammad met with much opposition on the part of their enemies, and this is expressed by their reaction to the signs: "*This is evident sorcery.*" Jesus, indeed, was accused of casting out devils through Beelzebub; and Muhammad of being a sorcerer (NOTES ON ISLAM, vol. II, p. 25).

—6. *When God will say*, on the day of resurrection comments Jalal.

Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah A strange question which reveals in Muhammad a very poor knowledge of things Christian! The question manifests what the qur'anic conception of the Christian Trinity is.

The Trinity is denied in several passages of the Qur'an. "Believe in God and his messengers and do not say 'Three'; desist; it will be better for you, for God is one God" (Qr. 4|171). "They blaspheme who say 'God is Christ the son of Mary' (5|75). "They do blaspheme who say 'God is one of three in a Trinity' (5|76). "Christ the son of Mary is no more than a messenger . . . His mother was a woman of truth. They both had to eat food" (5|78). In the passage we are reviewing Jesus is asked by God on the last day whether when on earth he ever taught that he and his mother were gods besides the one only God. If we add to this the fact that according to the Qur'an, the Holy Spirit (Ruh'ul-Qudus) is only an Angel (2|87; 66|4; 16|102) identified by commentators with the Angel Gabriel, we are led to conclude that Muhammad thought the Christian Trinity to consist of the trio: God the Father, Mary the Mother of God, and Jesus the Son of God.

Our conclusion is confirmed by the explanations given by the exegetes of the Qur'an. Jalal explaining the word "Three" of Qr. 4|171 quoted above says that these three are "Allah and Jesus, and his Mother." Al-Nasafi (Tafsir vol. I, p. 206) is more precise and cruder; he comments that Allah, the Messiah (another name for Jesus), and Mary are three gods and that the Messiah is the child—carnaliter—(walad'Ullah) of Allah from Mary. Al-Baidhawi is better informed. He repeats the common Mus-

lim opinion that the Trinity consists of Allah, Jesus and Mary, but he adds that some explain it otherwise. "Three," he says, "means that God is three persons (aqanim), the Father (*aʿAb*), the Son (*aʿIbn*) and the Holy Spirit (*Ruhʿul-Qudus*), and they (the Christians, no doubt), understand by Father the essence (*aʿdhat*), by the Son the knowledge (*aʿIlm*) and by the Holy Spirit the life (*Al-Hayat*)" (Baidhawi, Tafsir, vol. I, p. 243).

Where did Muhammad get his knowledge of the Trinity from is a real puzzle. There have been many heresies in the Church, but there is no trace anywhere of any heresy so gross as the one imputed to the Christians in the Qur'an. The nearest approach may be the heresy of the Collyridians. St. Epiphanius (†403) Bishop of Salamis speaks of a strange custom that would have spread from Thracia and Scythia into Arabia; Christian women led by the desire of enhancing the cult of Our Lady were offering in sacrifice to the Mother of God small cakes called *Kollyris*. The practice was superstitious and idolatric and was in consequence duly condemned by the Bishop of Salamis. St. John Damascene still speaks of the Collyridians in the VIIIth c., but he only reproduces the record left by St. Epiphanius (Vacant, D. T. III, 1, col. 369-379). There is no indication that this strange custom had spread into Central Arabia at the time of Muhammad; it is not likely, therefore, that the Qur'anic Trinity would originate from that heresy.

Instead of looking for the remnants of a strange heresy, we venture to propose another explanation. The Christians, even of little education, commonly call Jesus the Son of God, and Mary, the Mother of God; they also pray to God the Father. Christians understand readily that terminology. But to an uninitiated those titles are misleading, and they might easily be misinterpreted into meaning a holy divine family composed of God the Father, Mary the divine Mother and Jesus the Son of both! This might well have been the mistake of Muhammad; but then, claiming what he did, he should have known better.

Glory be to thee. Jesus' reply is evidently in the negative. But it is coined in such a way as to show that he is not God; hence he declares "*Thou knowest what is in my heart, though I know not what is in thine.*"

—7. *I did not say to them aught except what Thou didst command me to say.* This verse continues in the same trend as the previous one. Jesus merely obeys God's command whose servant he is: "He said (Jesus): 'Truly I am God's servant' (*Inni 'abd'Ullah*)" (Qr. 19|30), but in the sense of *only*: "He was no more than a servant" (*In hua illa 'abdun* Qr. 43|59).

The command was: "*Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.*" Jesus' mission is here made similar to the one of Muhammad; he has to preach the cult to the one Allah, apparently in opposition to the gross idolatry cult of the Mekkans and of the pre-Islamic Bedouins (see NOTES ON ISLAM, vol. I, pp. 53, 54).

But what is strange is the insistence on the opposition *my Lord and your Lord* (see also Qr. 5|75). The expression will have to be considered when we study the Nature of the Muslim Christ.

When Thou didst cause me to die (lamma tawaffaitani)—The verb *tawaffa* means "to collect full payment of a debt," "to cause someone to die" (said of God), "to die." But because the Muslims as a rule deny that Christ died on the cross, they translate: "When thou didst take me up." See below our section on the Death of Christ.

—8. *Kindness and mercy* distinguish the followers of Christ. This verse must be read in conjunction with Qr. 5/85: "Strongest among men in enmity to the believers (the Muslims) wilt thou find the Jews and the Pagans; and nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say, 'We are Christians': because among these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant" (Transl. A. Yusuf Ali). Muhammad had manifestly been struck by the central moral teaching of the Gospel, brotherly charity. It is to the credit of the little-cared-for Christians of central Arabia that they upheld by their lives the teaching of their Master.

As to monasticism. This verse has been the subject of much controversy. It is usually translated to mean that Muhammad condemned monastic life. Rodwell among others translates Qr. 57/27 as follows: "but as to the monastic life, they invented it themselves. The desire only of pleasing God did we prescribe to them," (The Koran, Everyman's Library, p. 410). Rodwell's rendering is the one more commonly accepted by orthodox Muslims. It commends itself by following literally the Arabic text of the Qur'an. But the meaning conveyed by that translation contradicts somewhat the one of that other verse (Qr. 5/85) where the reason for the humility and the kindness of the Christians is said to be the teaching and example of the Monks. Now surah 5 is considered to be much posterior to surah 57, and is perhaps the last surah revealed (See NOTES ON ISLAM, vol. II, p. 72); it expresses therefore the final mind of the Arabian Prophet. Hence some exegetes have tried to remove the contradiction by translating our verse after having construed it properly. We oppose the two translations for clarity sake:

"But the monasticism *which they invented for themselves*, We did not prescribe for them; (We commanded) only the seeking for the Good Pleasure of God . . ." (Yusuf Ali).

"As to monasticism—we did not prescribe it for them—*they invented it only* in search of God's good pleasure . . ."

In our second column the phrase "we did not prescribe it for them" has been read as a parenthesis after "monasticism" (*rahbaniyatan*), and "they invented it" (*ibtada'uha*) has been made to bear on "only." This way of reading brings the verse in agreement with 5/85 and remains grammatically correct. Without inversion it might read: "As to monasticism they invented it themselves—we did not prescribe it for them—(they invented it) only in search of God's good pleasure . . ."

Besides the argument from internal criticism we have to corroborate our point eminent Muslim Exegetes and Islamic Scholars. Zamakhshari rebuilds the Arabic sentence completely to mean: "As to monastic life, they have invented it themselves out of a desire to please God, we did not impose it on them" (Zamakhshari, Tafsir, II. pp. 437, 538). Marmaduke Pickthall adopts this interpretation in his translation of the Qur'an, which was published by the Hyderabad Government (The Glorious Qur'an, text and explanatory translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, Hyderabad-Deccan, 1938, vol. II, p. 722). Among European Scholars we count Fr. Henry Lammens, S.J. (L'Arabie Occidentale avant l'Hégire, Beyrouth, 1938, p. 85), Mr. Louis Massignon (Essai sur un Lexique Technique de la Mystique Musulmane, Paris, p. 126 fl., esp. p. 128 footnote). Richard Bell who attempted a new rendering of the Qur'an indicating the relative chronological position of the verses or group of verses (The Qur'an, Edinburgh, 1937, vol. II, p. 562).

They did not look after it with due care. This remark confirms what we wrote above concerning monastic life, viz. that God did not condemn it. It is clear that

the God of the Qur'an wanted monastic life to be fostered *haqqa ri'ayatiha*, "the fostering due to it." But it was not done; there were abuses. Which ones and where, the Qur'an does not say. Jalal comments that many abandoned the right monastic way, and they fell into heresy concerning the religion of Christ (*Tafsir*, vol. II., p. 293).

On those of them who believe. According to Nasafi (*Tafsir*, vol. IV, p. 184) this refers to "the people of kindness and mercy who followed Christ," i.e. the Christians in general; but Jalal seems to refer the phrase to the monks many of whom would have become Muslims (*Tafsir*, vol. II, p. 293). This is not unlikely to be correct. The monks of the Near East and of northern Arabia numbered thousands; in the VIth and VIIth centuries the atmosphere was rent with loud quarrels between Monophysites and Diphysites. Dissension, indiscipline made their way to monasteries and convents; open revolt against authority and exchange of blows between differing parties were not unheard of. The situation was tense and not a few better souls must have longed for proper leadership and guidance, when they heard of the message of Islam which a new Prophet was preaching or had preached in Central Arabia. Too little instructed to discover heresy, hearing of references to the Old Testament, and of stories about Christ which were the ones they knew, "many" gave their allegiance to the new Faith (see NOTES ON ISLAM, vol. I, pp. 58 ff; F. Nau, *Les Arabes Chrétiens de Mesopotamie et de Syrie au VII et VIII siècles*, Paris, 1936, pp. 25-27, 103, 107 ff.).

—9. *Let the followers of the Indjil judge by what God revealed in it.* It is interesting to note that the veracity of the Gospel is appealed to to judge of Muhammad's mission; for the Indjil referred to here is of necessity the written books which the Christians possessed. The Indjil is therefore a sure guide.

—10. *O ye that believe* is addressed to the people of the Book (Nasafi, *Tafsir*, vol. IV, p. 174) and more specifically to those who believe in Christ (Jalal, *Tafsir*, vol. II, p. 293). If they believe also in Muhammad, they will enjoy a double share of God's mercy, one, explains Nasafi, for their faith in Muhammad and one for what they believed in before. Those believers will be given a *light*, "a guidance that leads to the feet of the Holy One" (Baidhawi, *Tafsir*, vol. II., p. 316).

—11. *That the people of the Book may know that they have no power at all over God's bounty.* Some translate "over God's grace" (*fazl'Ullahi*) and it is surely correct since all the gifts of God are graces. But as the word "God's grace" has a somewhat technical and very special meaning for Catholics, we preferred the vaguer term bounty.

A modern Exegete comments as follows: "Let not any race, or people, or community, or group, believe that they have exclusive possession of God's grace, or that they can influence its grant and its withholding. God's grace is free, and entirely controlled by Him, independently of any priest and privileged people." (A. Yusuf Ali: *The Holy Qur'an* p. 1508). This taunt at priests is very common nowadays.

SUMMARY

So much has been said above that the main issue may have been lost sight of; we therefore summarize briefly the main points of Christ's mission and message according to the Qur'an:

- 1. He confirms the previous revelation (Taurah), but makes permissible some of the things formerly forbidden.
- 2. He preaches the Indjil, a guidance to men and an exhortation to the right service of God. The main theme of the Indjil is: Worship Allah, who alone is God.

- 3. He announces the coming of another messenger.
- 4. His mission is restricted to the Banu Israil, the Jews, it is not universal.
- 5. He comes to make clear some of the points about which people dispute.

B. TRADITION.

Much of what Tradition has to say about Christ, is found in the various commentaries of the Qur'an, and has therefore been related above. We add here some complementary details which did not find a place in our explanation of the text of the Qur'an.

For this section we made abundant use of *LE LIVRE DE LA CREATION ET DE L'HISTOIRE* by Motahhar ben Tahir el-Maqdisi (A.H. 355|A.D.966), translated by Clement Huart (Paris, 6 vol., 1899-1919). We shall refer to it merely as "Maqdisi" adding the volume and the page between brackets. Maqdisi's documentation is manifestly based mainly on the *Hadith*. We can, therefore, use him for our purpose even if at times we have to check him with some more authentic *muhaddith* or "collator of traditions."

The *Hadith* seems not to have understood better than the Qur'an did, the mission and message of Christ. The many *logia* or moral sayings attributed to Christ by Muslim writers, are of a much later date, and found mainly in works of sufi inspiration; they do not come under the present survey.

Jesus' Mission.—Jesus is acknowledged by Muslim Tradition to be the last of the prophets sent to the Jews. "The prophets of the Israelites were one thousand; the first was Moses and the last Jesus" (Maqdisi, III, 1). That Jesus was a Jewish prophet sent "to the Jews" is often insisted upon to show that his mission was restricted to one nation only. Commenting on Qr. 3|52 which we shall quote below, Baidhawi declared: "The children of Israel are particularized owing to his (Jesus') mission being peculiarly to them, or to refute those who asserted that he was sent to others" (Baidhawi, transl. Margoliouth in "Chrestomathia Baidawiana," p. 37). Yet the Historians of Islam like Abu'l-Hasan Ali Al-Mas'udi (A.H. 345|A.D. 956), Ibn Khaldun (Les Prolégomènes, trad. de Slane, vol. I, p. 472) and our Maqdisi describe how the Apostles of Christ dispersed throughout the world to spread His message. Maqdisi says explicitly: "Jesus sent through the different parts of the world some of his disciples to call men to the truth and teach them the religion" (III, 131); and Mas'udi: "The disciples of Jesus of Nazareth dispersed throughout the whole world" (Les Prairies d'Or, trad. Barbier de Meynard, vol. I, p. 300). This does not square well with the restrictions placed on Christ's mission by the Collators of Traditions.

All the prophets, whatever be the age in which they came and whatever be their nationality, all preached the same message; for, explains Maqdisi (III, 10), the mission of the prophets comes from one only and unique source of light. The Qur'an had said it already: "There never was a people without a warner (prophet) having lived among them" (Qr. c. 35, v. 24). "The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah—the which We have sent by inspiration to thee—and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: namely, that ye should remain steadfast in Religion, and make no divisions therein: to those who worship other things than God, hard is the way to which Thou callest them" (Qr. c. 42, v. 13, transl. A. Yusuf Ali).

No wonder then that each new prophet that comes confirms what was before him; a clever doctrine which Muhammad gave as a guarantee of his own orthodoxy. The belief in all the previous prophets or apostles is an article of the Muslim creed. The

Prophet was asked: "Now give me information about Faith." Muhammad answered "Believing in Allah, his angels, his books, his *apostles*, and in the last day, and believing in the decree, the good and the evil thereof" (Muslim, ch. Iman; see NOTES ON ISLAM, vol. II, p. 11-14, "*De fide apud Mahumedanos*").

It is said that Jesus received the revelation at the age of 13. Since he was taken to heaven at the age of 33, he was an active prophet for full twenty years (Maqdisi, III, 128).

Jesus' Appearance.—Jesus began his public ministry at the age of 30. His appearance was the one of a well-built man of medium stature, "his hair was brown-red and curled, his chest broad" (Al-Bukhari, Les Traditions Musulmanes, trad. Houdas-Marciais, vol. II, p. 518).

Jesus' Apostles.—Jesus gathered around him 12 apostles whom the Qur'an calls by the strange name of *hawariyun* (Qr. 3|52: 5|114, 115). The Muslim authorities derive the word either from a root *hawara* meaning *to return*, or from a root *hawira* meaning *to be glistening white*. If the first derivation is adopted, *hawari* is "one to whom one turns for help," a helper; but the second derivation is more popular: "the disciples are said to have been called *hawariyun* because they were fullers whose profession was to clean clothes, or because they wore white clothing, or because of the purity of their inward life" (Jeffery, Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an, p. 116; also Al-Khazin, Lubab'ul-Ta'wil, vol. I, p. 298, comment on Qr. 4|52).

The word *hawari* (plural: *hawariyun*), explains Dr. Jeffery (*op. c.*), is most probably a borrowing from the Ethiopian meaning "apostle." The word was to all likelihood brought back to Medina by the Muslim emigrants to Abyssinia. The word, indeed, occurs only in Medinan surahs.

The names of Christ's apostles, the 12 *hawariyun* are not mentioned in the Qur'an; but Tradition has several lists of names. Maqdisi gives their names to have been: "Simon Peter, their chief who was called the rock of the Faith, John, Thomas, Luke, Mathias, Fotros, Yohannes, Andrew, Philip, Georges, Ya'qubos, Matthew, James, Balos (Paul)" (Maqdisi, III, 131). In the QUSUS AL ANBIYA another list is given: "Know, that the disciples were the chosen of Jesus, the son of Mary, and His favourites; those in whom He was pleased, and His helpers and viziers. They were twelve in number, and their names were: Simon, the yellow one (pale), who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and Yahya his brother; Philip and Bartholomew and Thomas and Matthew, the toll-gatherer; James the son of Alpha, and Liya (Levi) who was called Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite, and Jude Iscariot (upon them be peace)." (Zwemer, The Moslem Christ, p. 80).

The Call of the Apostles.—How the *hawariyun* were called by Christ is interesting. Here too there are various versions. Mas'udi (Prairies d'or, vol. I, p. 123) narrates that "the Messiah, whilst passing by the lake of Tiberias, saw there some fishermen who were the sons of Zebede, and twelve fullers; he called them to God and told them: 'Follow me and you will catch men'". Al-Khazin (*op. c.* vol. I, p. 298) puts things in a different way, mixing various events in a delightful manner. The Qur'an (3,52) had said: "When Jesus found unbelief on their part (of the Jews), He said: 'Who will be my helpers to (the work of) God?' Said the Disciples: 'We are God's helpers: we believe in God, and do thou bear witness that we are Muslims'". Commenting on the passage Al-Khazin explains: Jesus happened "to pass by a group of fishermen; they were twelve and their chiefs were Simon and James, Jesus said: What are you doing?

They replied: We are catching fish. Jesus asked: Would you not like to catch men? They enquired: Who are you? He said: I am Jesus the son of Mary, the (a) servant of God and His messenger! They demanded a sign to prove his veracity." Jesus then performed the miracle of the draught of fish, and the disciples believing in him followed him. "And it is said that they were fishermen, but when they had believed in Jesus, they began to catch men and to guide them to the Faith" (Khazin, *op. c.* vol. I, p. 298).

The Four Gospels.—All these topsyturvy accounts of events which could easily have been checked by reference to the proper sources, the authentic Gospels, show that even respectable Muslim writers of the first centuries of Islam had but a scanty knowledge of the beginnings of a Religion whose followers they met throughout the vast empire of the Khalifs. Yet some of them at least knew of the existence of those sources. Mas'udi (*Les prairies d'or*, vol. I, pp. 123, 124) tells us explicitly that "Matthew (Matta), John (Yohanna), Mark (Markoch) and Luke (Luka) were the four apostles who wrote the Gospel and narrated the story of the Messiah, his birth, the baptism which he received from John, the son of Zachary, or John the Baptist, in the lake of Tiberias, or according to others in the Jordan . . . One also finds in that book the story of the extraordinary deeds and of the miracles performed by the Messiah, and the treatment the Jews inflicted on him, finally his ascension at the age of thirty-three. The Gospel provides also long details concerning the Messiah, Mary and Joseph the Carpenter; but we think we must omit them, because neither God, nor his prophet Muhammad have related them (in the Qur'an)".

To judge from this last sentence, it looks as if Mas'udi had not read the authentic Gospels. This conclusion may also be borne by the way Mas'udi narrates the vocation of Christ: "The Christians pretend that Jesus, the Nazarean, that is the Messiah, followed the religion of his ancestors, and that he studied during 29 or 30 years the Pentateuch and the ancient books in a synagogue called Al-Midrās. One day whilst reading the book of Isaias, he saw these words written in letters of fire: 'You are my son and my essence, I have elected you for me' (comp. Matthew 12, 18; Isaias, 42, 1)". He shut the book, returned it to the servant of the temple and went out saying: 'Now the word of God has been accomplished in the son of man'" (Mas'udi, *op. c.* vol. I, p. 122).

The Indjil.—What has the Hadith to say about the *Indjil*? We already made some passing reference to it above. We add here an interesting extract from the *Kashf'ul-Zunun*, a bibliographical dictionary compiled about 300 years ago by Hadji Khalifah of Istambul (died A.H. 1068/A.D. 1658) and published in translation by T. P. Hughes in "A Dictionary of Islam" (at the word: *Injil*, p. 212).

"The *Indjil* is a book which God revealed to 'Isa ibn Mariyam. In the work entitled *al-Muwahib* (by Shihabu'l-Din Ahmad al-Qastalani, died A.H. 923), it is recorded that the *Indjil* was first revealed in the Syriac tongue, and has since been translated into seventeen languages. But in the *Sahih'u'l-Bukhari* (A.H. 256), in the story of Waraqah ibn Naufal, it is related that the *Indjil* was revealed in Hebrew. According to Wahb ibn Munabbih, as quoted by Zamakhshari (A.H. 538) in the *Kashshaf*, the *Indjil* was revealed to Jesus on the 13th day of the month Ramazan, although some say it was on the 18th day of that month, 1200 years after the revelation of the Zabur (Psalms) to Moses.

"It is a disputed, question whether or not the *Indjil* abrogates the Law of Moses (Taurat). Some say that Jesus was not a *Sahab'ush-Shari'ah* (a law-giver); for it is

said in the *Indjil*: 'I am not come to abrogate (*tabdil*) the Law of Moses, but to fulfil it (*takmil*)'.

"But al-Baidhawi (A.H. 685), in his commentary the *Anwar'ut-Tanzil*, seems to prove that the Law of Jesus does abrogate the Law of Moses (*Shar'u Musa*) for there are certain things revealed to Jesus which were not revealed to Moses."

The Indjil corrupted.—The *Indjil* is commonly said to have been corrupted by the disciples anxious to prove the divinity of Christ. This corruption (*tahrif*) is of two kinds: a corruption of the meaning (*tahrif bi'l-ta'wil*) and a corruption of the words (*tahrif bi'l-lafz*).

Modern Muslims, especially, and the old controversialists pretend that the Christians (and the Jews) have tampered with the very text of their holy Scriptures (*tahrif bi'l-lafz*) so as to introduce in them new doctrines and obliterate all the references to Ahmad. There are however not a few great Muslim scholars who accept the authenticity of the Gospels, but they will agree that the Christians (and the Jews) have interpreted their Scriptures in such a way as to mislead the hearers (*tahrif bi'l-ta'wil*). Al-Bukhari records a tradition from Ibn 'Abbas who would have said: "the word *tahrif* signifies to change a thing from its original nature; and there is no man who could corrupt a single word of what proceeded from God, so that the Jews and Christians could corrupt only by misrepresenting the meaning of the word of God" (quoted by T. P. Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam*, at the word: Corruption of the Scriptures, p. 62). Ibn Khaldun speaks with much respect of the Gospels and does not mention any wanton corruption. The Apostles, he declares, "wrote down the Gospel which Jesus had received from Heaven; they made four renderings of that book to consign the text as it had been transmitted to them in diverse ways . . . These four renderings of the Gospel do not . . . contain purely the revelation; discourses of Christ and of the apostles have been inserted in them" (Ibn Khaldun, *Prolegomenes*, trad. de Slane, vol. I, p. 472). Al-Ghazzali too accepted loyally the *textus receptus* of the Gospels without accusing the Christians of having corrupted the text of the Gospels, but he attacked the false interpretation they were giving of it (L. Massignon, *Le Christ dans les Evangiles selon Al Ghazali*, Extr. R. E. I., 1932, p. 525; also Al Ghazali, *Refutation Excellente de la Divinite de Jesus Christ d'apres les Evangiles*, texte, trad. comment. du R. Chidiac, s.j. Paris, 1939, p. 36).

The Scriptural Prophecies about Muhammad.—As we said above (p. 12 fl.) the contention that the Christians had altered the word *perichutos* said to be a Greek rendering of *Ahmad*, into *Paracletos*, is an invention of later date. The *Muhaddithun* do not mention that alteration, yet they believe that the Prophet of Islam was somehow announced in the Scriptures of the Jews and of the Christians. They knew of the texts of John regarding the coming of the Promised One, and they applied them to Muhammad.

Ibn-Ishaq, a biographer of Muhammad, is reported to have said: "In the Gospel, there is what John wrote when he sings God's praise over the description of the prophet: The word which is in the Law, must be accomplished; (this will be) when will come the person called in Syriac *Abikhemna*, that is Muhammad, and in Greek *Paracletos*" (Maqdisi, vol. 5, p. 31).

Concluding a short dissertation on Muhammad's miracles, (l.c. p. 30) Maqdisi writes: "The scholars have pointed out in the Pentateuch, the Gospel and other books revealed by God, the characteristic signs and the proofs of his prophetship (Muhammad's)".

To follow the development of this chapter of Muslim apologetics would take us very far. What we said is surely enough to give us a fair idea of what early Tradition knew of Christ. It does not add much to what we know from the Qur'an itself, as far as historical facts are concerned or Christ's mission and nature.

As Tradition progressed, the inner beauty and greatness of that Qur'anic Christ gradually faded away. The Christ of the Qur'an became some sort of type for Muhammad, or his precursor. We shall see in a next chapter the exalted place which the Qur'an grants to Isā ibn Mariyam, and also how Muslim Divines gradually installed in His place the Prophet of Islam so that in the devotion of the common Muslim, Muhammad is now but a little less than Christ in Christianity.

3. THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

A. *THE QUR'AN*.—Qr. 3|55; 19|33; 4|157-158.

- 1. Behold! God said: O Jesus, I shall cause thee to die and I shall raise thee to myself, and I shall purify thee from those who have disbelieved; and I will place those who followed thee above those who disbelieved, until the day of resurrection. Then to me is your return (then you shall all return to me) . . . (3|55).
- 2. (Jesus when still in the cradle said:) And peace was on me the day I was born, and (it will be) on the day I shall die and on the day I shall be raised up again to life. (19|33).
- 3. As to their saying: Surely we did kill the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of God! Well, they did not kill him and they did not crucify him; for one was for them made to look like him! And truly, those who differed about him, they were in doubt concerning him, having no proper knowledge about him, but only an opinion to follow. They did not kill him; that is certain! (4|157).
- 4. Nay, God lifted him up to himself. And God is mighty and wise! (4|158).

Commentary

—1. This verse is part of *Surat Imran* which belongs to the first half of the Medinan surahs. We have taken long extracts from it already as most details concerning Christ are found in it. The passage in question is of paramount importance as it touches a fundamental truth of Christianity, the death and the resurrection of Christ, the Redeemer.

The verse 3|55 is said by Muslim commentators to explain the verse immediately preceding, which we have omitted in our above selection because it is difficult to see in it a reference to the death of Christ. It reads: "And they plotted and God plotted and the best of plotters is God." The plotting is supposed to be the one of the unbelieving Jews; they plotted to put Jesus to death. But God unravelled their plotting in the manner explained in v. 55. Such is the explanation of Jalal (Tafsir, p. 81), of Nasafi (Tafsir, vol. II, p. 124), of Baidhawi (see *Chrestomathia Baidawiana*, p. 40 ff). "God plotted," explains Baidhawi, "in raising Jesus and throwing the semblance of him (of Jesus) upon him who plotted his destruction, who was killed." According to Muslim Commentators God refers to this plot in v. 55; in fact it begins, not as we did abruptly with the word "Behold," but with a temporal conjunction which is said to explain how God is the best of plotters. It might, then, be rendered: "God is the best of plotters; (He showed it) when He said: O Jesus . . ."

O Jesus, I shall cause thee to die (*Inni mutawaffika*). A much controverted verse. Baidhawi understands *Inni mutawaffika* to mean "I will complete the term fixed for you." A. Yusuf Ali translates it "I will take thee," Marmaduke Pickthall "Lo! I am gathering Thee," etc. Baidhawi explains his meaning as follows: "I will achieve the whole of thy term and cause thee to tarry till the appointed end, by protecting thee from their (of the Jews) murderous onslaught.—Or, 'Take thee from the earth,' the verb in the text being used in the sense of calling in money.—Or, 'take thee to myself sleeping,' since it is recorded that he was taken up sleeping.—Or, destroy in thee the lust which hinders ascent to the world of spirits. Some say that God let him die for seven hours, and then raised him to heaven; and this is held by the Christians." (Chrestomathia Baidhawiana, transl. Margoliouth, p. 41).

Baidhawi's explanation is the one commonly given by Muslim Exegetes with more or less details (Nasafi, vol. I, p. 124 fl.; Jalal, vol. I, p. 71; especially Al-Khazin, vol. I, p. 299, who with much generosity has gathered all the various opinions he came across).

All these explanations are brought forward by Muslim divines in a vain attempt to justify an opinion which has taken root in Islam viz. that Christ was not crucified and that he did not die at the hands of the Jews. This belief is recorded in Qr. 4|157 quoted above.

But with due reverence to the opinion of the Muslim divines, it is difficult to give a philological justification for the variety of opinion on the meaning of *tawaffa*.

Tawaffa is the Vth form of *wafa* (to fulfil a promise, to pay off a debt) and therefore implies some reflection to the subject: "to collect full payment of a debt," "to receive" (payment), "to take to oneself some due." When it is said of God, it means "to cause to die," and in the passive "to die." Without doing violence to the word, it cannot be made to mean all that Baidhawi sees in the word. Of course he does not discard the meaning "God caused him to die," but he manifestly does not adopt it.

It is true that this verse is contradicted by Qr. 4|157, but it is supported by Qr. 19|33 where death is clearly mentioned, *yaumna amutu*, "on the day I shall die." It may be supposed by the fact of the raising up referred to in Qr. 3|55, *rafi'uka ilaiya* "I shall raise thee to myself," and more clearly by Qr. 19, 33, *yauma ub'athu haiyan*, "on the day I shall be raised up again to life."

But according to all probability Qr. 4|157 which denies the crucifixion and death of Christ is later than the other two passages. Qr. 19|33 dates from Mekka and 3|55 from the beginning of Medina (see NOTES ON ISLAM, vol. II, p. 71 fl.). Why the discrepancy?

When Muhammad came to Medina, he had a hard time arguing with the Jews. He wanted them to acknowledge that he was in the line of Abraham, Moses and all the prophets; his bringing in Jesus and placing him on a level with Moses, could not have been to the liking of the Jews, and must have sounded to them a poor guaranty of Muhammad's mission. They seem to have boasted of having killed Jesus. The taunt brought Muhammad's reply.

Muhammad's reply shows that he had by now come under docetic influence, an influence much less apparent if at all existing in the earlier surahs. (see below).

And I shall raise thee to myself (rafī'uka), i.e. I shall lift you up to the place of my glory and the Angels' abode (Baidhawi). The verb *rafa'a* "to lift, to raise" is often translated by Christian apologists as synonymous with "to bring back to life," and they see in the word a reference to the Resurrection of Christ. But such an interpretation seems to go beyond the immediate meaning of the word *rafa'a*. The word *rafa'a* does not necessarily suppose the death of the subject "lifted up, raised up." Muslim commentators interpret the word to mean that Christ was taken up bodily into heaven, like Enoch and Elias. There may, however, be in this interpretation and in the very word used by Muhammad a veiled reference to a misunderstood Ascension into Heaven.

But if we read *rafa'a* in the light of the expression *'ab'athu hayan* of Qr. 19, 33 (I shall bring you back to life), then we may well read in *rafa'a* an allusion to the Resurrection of Christ in the Christian sense. Muslim commentators, however, have refused to understand things that way. For them Christ was taken up by God bodily into heaven before the death on the cross, and in heaven he will in due time be transformed into an Angel, that is: he will be free from all passion (Khazin, vol. I, p. 300). See below sub 2.

The Muslims who translate *mutawaffika* by "I shall make you die," understand that Christ was brought back to life before being lifted up to heaven; others, who are many pretend that Christ was smuggled away by God into heaven lest he be crucified by the Jews. According to them, therefore, Jesus did not die; he is still alive now and will come back to this earth at the end of the world as will be explained below. After his return, he will die a real death and be buried at Medina, where a tomb is said to be left vacant close to the one of Muhammad (The Holy Cities of Arabia, by Edmond Rutter, London, 1930, p. 305 fl.)

I shall purify thee from those who have disbelieved. Those who disbelieved are manifestly the Jews who were against Christ and persecuted him. *I shall purify thee (mutahhiruka)*: Yusuf Ali translates, "I shall clear thee (of the falsehoods) of those who blaspheme," and he explains: "Jesus was charged by the Jews with blasphemy as claiming to be God or the son of God. The Christian (except a few early sects which were annihilated by persecution, and the modern sect of the Unitarians, who are almost Muslims) adopted the substance of the claim, and made it the cornerstone of their faith. God clears Jesus of such a charge or claim" (The Holy Quran, footnote 395). But this explanation seems to be a projection thirteen centuries back of a theory that has found favour with Modern Muslims. The comment of Khazin is probably more in line with Muslim traditional belief when he writes: "I shall make you come out of their midst and deliver you from them," the Jews (vol. I, p. 300). The whole qur'anic passage is about Jesus being saved from the death of the Cross by a special intervention of God, *Mutahhiruka* should, then, best be translated: "I shall deliver thee."

I shall place those who followed thee above those who disbelieved. According to Baidhawi (Chrestomathia, p. 41) the followers of Jesus are "the Muslims and the Christians who believed in his mission" "They shall prevail" over the unbelievers "by arguments or by the sword in the majority of cases." Baidhawi confidently concludes "and to this day we have never heard of the Jews prevailing over them (The Muslims and the Christians), neither have they ever obtained sovereignty or empire." This superiority of Christ's followers over his enemies will last till the end of times, *until the day of resurrection* (Khazin, vol. I, p. 300).

There seems to be here a vague reminiscence or reference to Christ's promise that the gates of Hell will not prevail against His Church, and that He will stay with His own until the end of times. Permanence and final triumph are always connected with the mission of Christ in this world.

The commentary of Yusuf Ali (The Holy Quran, footnote 396) on the words "those who follow thee" is very interesting and typical of modern Muslim apologists. We quote from it: "The Muslims are the true Christians, for they follow the true teaching of Christ which did not include the blasphemy that he was God or the Son of God in the literal sense."

Then to me is your return. This clause is not addressed to Christ, but to both those who believed in Christ and those who did not; they all will have to return to God to be judged. The verse of the Qur'an continues: "and I will judge between you of the matters wherein ye dispute."

There is some anomaly in this clause. God in the beginning of the verse is addressing Christ and evidently uses the singular form "*ka*" (Thee); in the expression "your return," however the plural "*kum*" (*marji'ukum*) is used; for God is now addressing the believers in Christ and his opponents. In the following verse (3/56) the unbelievers are spoken of in the third person. These unexpected variations make it very difficult at times to understand the proper meaning of the Holy Book.

—2. *And peace was upon me the day I was born.* The words are those Jesus spoke in the cradle (see above THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST, p. 3 fl.). God's blessing accompanies Jesus throughout life; it descended on him especially on the day he was born. We remember, indeed, that by God's special favour Jesus was kept pure from the touch of Satan (see ref. above, and Khazin, vol. IV, p. 199).

And (it will be) on the day I shall die. There is here a manifest reference to the death of Christ (*yauma amutu*: on the day I shall die). But early commentators do not agree as to when that day is to be. To be consequent with themselves, they pretend that there is here question of the death of Christ after his second coming. But the context seems to suggest death in the near future, within the normal span of human life. Christ is made to speak of his attitude towards his mother (see above p. 4) and of God's predilection; nothing suggests a return to this world at the end of times. Hence modern Muslim exegetes who have come in closer contact with Christians acknowledge that in the present verse, Christ speaks of the death which must end his first coming. Yusuf Ali: "Those who believe that he (Christ) never died should ponder over this verse" (The Holy Quran, footnote 2485.)

And on the day I shall be raised up again to life. If the words (*ub'athu haiyan*) are taken literally and in their context, they unmistakably refer to the resurrection of Christ from the death. The addition of *haiyan* "alive" to *ub'athu* "I shall be raised up" can leave no serious doubt as to the meaning of the clause; and it confirms the meaning of the previous one; for to be raised up to life again, one must have died.

But the official Muslim commentators insist on referring these passages about the death and the resurrection of Christ to the last day. Khazin explains our text as follows: "(I shall be raised alive) i.e. (saved?) from the terrors of Resurrection Day" (vol. IV, p. 199). Nasafi (vol. III, p. 27) and Baidhawi (Fleischer, p. 580) remind us that what is here affirmed of Jesus was said before of John the Baptist, Yahya. About Yahya the Qur'an had said: "He was devout and kind to his parents, and he was not overbearing nor rebellious. So peace on him the day he was born, and on the day that he dies and on the day that he will be raised up to life" (Qr. 19/13-15). This formula, then, seems to be one of blessings, much similar to the one usually added after

the names of Prophets but more elaborate, with this difference, however, that it was put in the first person in the mouth of the Child Jesus.

From thus assimilating Christ to Yahya, we may perhaps see a further confirmation of what we wrote above about Christ's death. Christ like John the Baptist ended his earthly course by death. But it also agrees with what Muslim commentators say about Christ's resurrection, viz. that it is to take place not as a separate event after three days but at the end of times on the *yawm'al-qiyamat*, the Resurrection Day.

As to their saying: Surely we did kill the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of God! The saying here mentioned is the one Muhammad attributes to the Jews. In fact the whole passage from which this verse is taken, is about them. Muhammad annoyed at the attitude of the Jewish community towards him, reproaches them their passed iniquities: how they adored the golden calf, disbelieved in God's signs and killed His messengers. "And they rejected the faith and they spoke against Mary a grave calumny (they accused her of fornication) and they said, 'We have killed Jesus the Messiah!'"

There may be a taunt in this remark of the Jews. When Muhammad preached to them Christ, extolling his greatness, he naturally met with little response from the Jews; it was in their eyes a poor commendation for his own claims to prophethood. They laughed him to scorn and boasted to have killed that Jesus (comp. Baidhawi, *Fleischer*, p. vol. I, p. 240). Muhammad saw in this another lie of the Jews always bent on deceiving him; he denied their saying.

Well, they did not kill him and they did not crucify him; for one was for them made to look like him! By these words, Muhammad meant to take the defence of Christ. Out of misunderstood respect for Christ he denied that he had been really crucified; someone else whom God had made to look like Christ, was crucified in his stead. Baidhawi explains things as follows: "It is related that a group of Jews insulted him (Jesus) and his mother, and he invoked God against them and God changed them into monkeys and into pigs. And the Jews plotted among themselves to kill him, but God informed him that He would raise him up to heaven. And he (Jesus) said to his companions: 'O ye, (God) wants to put on (someone) my features, and that one will be killed and crucified and (made to) enter heaven. One of them stood forward and God threw on him his (Christ's) resemblance, and he was killed and crucified.—And it is said that there was a man who wanted to betray him (Jesus), and he went unto him to lead him astray, but God threw his (Jesus's) resemblance on him, and he was apprehended and crucified.—And it is said also that Titanus the Jew had entered a house where Jesus was, and God imprinted on him Jesus' features. When he came out, the people thought that it was Jesus, and they caught him and crucified him. (Baidhawi, *Tafsir*, ed. *Fleischer*, vol. I, p. 240, lines 8-12)."

The hesitations of commentators in explaining how the metamorphosis took place is poor commendation for the theory proposed. This substitution story appears to be very much like a reminiscence of a strange Christian heresy that found favour in some dark quarters of the Near East. The Christians of Arabia belonged to the great monophysite group that followed in the wake of the various docteric sects of the near East. One of those sects, the one of the Basilidians—founded by Basilides, a gnostic of Alexandria who taught during the reign of Hadrian (A. D. 117-138)—pretended, according to some sources, that Christ personally had not suffered. At the time of the Passion Jesus assumed the features of Simon of Cyrene and Simon was made to look like Jesus. The Jews then mistook Simon for Jesus, made him carry the cross, and crucified him whilst Jesus, in Simon's disguise, watched the execution. Standing before the cross he mocked the executioners unable to recognize him. Having thus escaped suffering,

he returned to the one who had sent him (Dict. de Theol., Vacant, art: Docetism, vol. IV, col. 1490 d; art: Basilide, vol. II, col. 472 a)! In this connection Rodwell (Koran, p. 427 footnote 2) gives an interesting footnote on the words "they had only his likeness." He writes: "Photius, B.bl. Cod. cxiv. says that the Apocr. Book, Periodoi apostoloon, pollas . . . atopias avaplattei, kai Xriston me stauroothenai, all 'eteron ant'autou. — . . . Mani Ep. Fund. ap. Evodium: "Princeps itaque tenebrarum cruci est affixus, idemque coronam spineam portavit."

According to the Gospel of Barnabas it was Judas, not Simon who was given the features of the Saviour! This mean trick is surely not in tune with the character of Christ as revealed by the Gospels. Whether it was still believed in or not by the Christian Arabs at the time of the Hegira is difficult to ascertain, but the Qur'anic teaching referred to above seems to suggest that in some circles at least the belief in a substitution was still held.

And truly those who differed about him, they were in doubt concerning him, having no proper knowledge about him; but only an opinion to follow—

Muhammad seems to refer to the many disputes over the real identity and the nature of Christ. The Jews had their opinions, and the heretical Christians of the Near East had many more. Baidhawi has recorded some of those opinions. Explaining the divergence of opinions he writes: " (they differed) about Jesus' conditions . . . Some Jews said: 'He (Jesus) was a deceiver and we certainly put him to death.'—Others doubted (this) and said: 'the one (called Jesus) was not Jesus, but in his place was a companion of ours': others said: 'the face was the face of Jesus, but the body was the body of our companion:—And he who heard him say, Surely God will lift me up to heaven, declared: 'he was lifted up to heaven.—And some people say: 'the humanity was crucified, the divinity was lifted up" (Baidhawi, o. c. p. 240, line 17 fl.) To these various opinions, Nasafi adds: "The Christians too differ (about all this); they say (Jesus was) God, and the son of God, and the third of three" (Tafsir, vol. 1, p. 203 end).

They did not kill him; that is certain.—We translated this clause in the light of what was affirmed at the very beginning of the verse. We take it therefore to mean an emphatic confirmation of what was affirmed above, viz. that Jesus was not put to death at all as the Jews boastingly pretended. So comment Baidhawi (l. c.) and Nasafi (o. c. p. 204 top), and their interpretation is the common one, and the orthodox one in Islam.

But the Arabic phrase we are now considering, *ma qataluhu yaqinan*, may also be rendered: "they did not really kill him," (*qatlan yaqinan*: a sure killing). This interpretation had to appeal to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Muhammad Ali and the Ahmadiyyas. Following a well-known modern tendency, the Ahmadiyya do accept that Christ was actually crucified—he himself, not merely a similitude—but he did not actually die on the cross; he only fell into a deep coma. In the coolness of the tomb he revived and went about preaching again; in his wandering he reached Srinagar in Kashmir where he died and where his tomb is kept to this day! (Jesus in India, by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad 9 May, 1944, pp. 68, 69.)

This belief of the Ahmadis forced Muhammad Ali to revise considerably the translation of Qr. 4:157. Here it is. We italicize the passages changed: "And their saying: "Surely we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the apostle of Allah; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but (*the matter*) *was made dubious to them* (*wa lakin shubbiha lahum*), and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and *they know it not for sure* (*wa ma qataluhu yaqinan*)" (The Holy Qur'an, transl. by Maulvi Muhammad Ali, Lahore, 1920, p. 241 ll.).

In the commentary that accompanies the text, the author aligns all his arguments — they will be considered at a later stage — to show that Christ, although crucified, did not die on the cross, and he tries to justify his translation where it differs from the traditional way. We note the following two:

—(a) *shubbiha lahum*: "it was made dubious to them," instead of "one was for them made to look like him" or better with R. Bell, (The Qur'an vol. I, p. 89) "he was counterfeited for them." M. Ali's translation may be philologically justified as 'he word *shabbaha* may mean both "to cause to resemble" and "to render doubtful," and *lahum* "to them," seems to fit in with both meanings although dictionaries do not mention the use of the preposition *la* with the verb *shabbaha* but M. Ali departed from Muslim orthodoxy by adopting the translation he did. What we like to retain, however, is less the translation, than the fact that M. Ali holds with orthodox Christians that there was no substitution on the cross: Christ was crucified.

—(b) *wa ma qataluhu yaqinan*: "They knew it not for sure" instead of "They did not kill him; that is certain." In the margin, M. Ali has added in small types "or, killed him"; but he does not adopt this translation. The translation he did adopt is clever and shows his shrewdness. Going against the whole Muslim tradition, he has been able to make the Qur'an say what he himself teaches. The verb *qatala*, means primarily "to kill," but also at times "to know." In the Arabic-French dictionary by de Biberstein-Kazimirski (at the root QTL) the Arabic phrase *wa ma qataluhu yaqinan* is translated: "*ils ne le savaient pas*," and Baidhawi in his commentary at the word in question gives that translation as a possible one: *wa qila ma'nahu ma 'alimuhu yaqinan*, it is said that its meaning is "they did not know it for sure."

But if the words taken by themselves can mean what M. Ali makes them mean, the context seems to be against his interpretation. It would be strange indeed if within the same verse the key word—*qatala*—was to be used in two very different meanings. The whole verse is a refutation of the Jewish boast "We did KILL the Messiah" (*qatalna'l-masiha*). Muhammad retorts using the same word "They did not Kill him" (*ma qataluhu*); he ends with the exclamation: "*wa ma qataluhu yaqinan*" "For sure they did not KILL him!" It is hardly the place to play on the word *qatala*.

Of course these last words "For sure they did not kill him" do seem to be unnecessary for the understanding of the verse. They give the impression of being out of place, and it may well be that originally they were part of another utterance about the same subject, which compilers combined with the present verse (see The Qur'an, transl. by Richard Bell, vol. I, p. 89). If this were to be the case, it would confirm the general opinion that this *ma qataluhu* has the same meaning as the previous one, viz. "they did not kill him."

—4. *Nay God lifted him up to himself. And God is mighty and wise.*

This verse like the precedent is fraught with difficulties, philological and doctrinal. It begins with a word marking strong opposition, *bal*, "nay, on the contrary." It completes and rectifies what was just denied: "They did not kill him, nay, on the contrary, God took him up to himself." Baidhawi sees in this a further proof that Jesus was not killed (l. c. line 26); for, God is supposed to have taken Jesus up alive into heaven.

Old Commentators do not gloss much over this passage. The subject, indeed, was touched already in Qr. 3/55 (see this study above sub 1, p. 25 and Khazin, Tafsir, vol. I, p. 515). Old Commentators refers the reader to that section, so does Muhammad Ali.

Muhammad Ali has his own explanation of the word *rafa'* to raise up. It means he says raising, elevating, but also exalting or making honourable. "But where the

raf' of a man to Allah is spoken of in the Holy Qur'an, or in the religious literature of Islam, it is without a single exception in the latter sense, for raising a man in his body to Himself implies that the Divine Being is limited to a place (The Holy Qur'an, footnote 437). Hence he translates 4:158 as he did 3:55: "Nay! Allah exalted him in his presence." This exaltation by God of the crucified was meant as a reply to the Jews for whom: "he is accursed of God that hangeth on a tree" (Deut. c. 21 v. 25).

As mentioned above (p. 25), it may well be that this rafa's is a veiled reference to the Ascension of Christ as mentioned by Saint Luke at the end of his Gospel (24:50-53) and the Acts (1:9-12). For it is interpreted by not a few to mean "taken up to heaven." Al-Baidhawi explains "to the place of my (God's) glory and the abode of my angels" (Chrestomathia, p. 41 on Qr. 3:55, b8). Except for this obscure mention, Muslims have ignored the Christian conception of the Ascension of Christ. They have connected it with the magic substitution of Christ on the cross.

B. TRADITION

What the Qur'an has to teach about the two most important events of Christ's life, His death on the Cross and His resurrection from the dead, is really disappointing; it shows very little knowledge of things Christian.

The Hadith, the early one especially, is also poorly informed about Christianity; for we notice the same hesitations and prejudices as in the Qur'an. It is regrettable that closer contacts with authentic Christians did not succeed in bringing better understanding.

No doubt historians of later date like Maqdisi, Mas'udi and others, will report fairly correctly the common Christian doctrine about the Saviour, but for information sake only. They were not impressed by it. We feel in all of them the conviction deeply ingrained that beyond the limited teaching of the Qur'an there is nothing reliable nor worthy of belief. Concluding some consideration on the Gospel, Mas'udi (Prairies d'or, trad. Barbier, vol. I, p. 124; italics are ours) candidly writes: "The Gospel gives also long details on the Messiah, Mary and Joseph the Carpenter; but we think we have to omit them because neither God nor his prophet Muhammad related them in the Qur'an."

—*The passion and death of Christ.* Abu'l Fida in his "Universal History" has summarized what is the common teaching of tradition on the passion and death of Christ. We quote from the translation by James Robson in CHRIST IN ISLAM (London, Murray, coll. Wisdom of the East, p. 39 fl.): "Ibn Said said: And when God informed the Messiah that he was going from the world he was disturbed at that and called the disciples and prepared food for them and said, 'Come to me to-night, for I have need of you.' Then when they gathered at night, he gave them supper and rose to serve them; and when they had finished eating he began to wash their hands and wipe them with his clothes; but they disdained that, so he said, 'Whosoever rejects anything of what I do is not one of mine.' Then they left him alone until he finished. Then he said, 'I have only done this that you should have in me an example of serving one another. And as regards my need of you it is that you should strive for me in prayer to God that my end may be delayed.' But when they wished to do that, God cast sleep on them, so that they were incapable of prayer; and the Messiah began to waken them and rebuke them, but they only increased in sleep and laziness and told him that they were too overcome for that. Then the Messiah said, 'Praise be to God! The shepherd is taken away and the sheep are scattered.' Afterwards he said to them, 'Verily I say unto you, one of you will deny me before the cock crows, and one of you will sell me for a small sum of money and will consume my price.'

And the Jews had been energetic in searching for him; then one of the disciples came to Herod, the governor of the Jews, and to a company of the Jews and said, 'What will you assign me if I guide you to the Messiah?' They assigned him thirty dirhems and he took them and guided them to him. Then God (Exalted is He!) raised the Messiah to 'Heaven' and cast his likeness on him who led them to him."

And when the Jews seized the person who had been made to resemble him, they bound him and began to lead him with a rope and say to him, 'You were raising the dead. Can you not save yourself from this rope?' And they were spitting in his face and putting thorns on him and they crucified him on the cross for six hours. Then Joseph the carpenter asked for him from the governor who was over the Jews whose name was Pilate and whose title was Herod, and buried him in a grave which the aforementioned Joseph had prepared for himself. Then God sent down the Messiah from heaven to his mother Mary, when she was weeping for him and he said to her, 'Verily God had raised me to Himself and nothing but good has befallen me.' And he gave her instructions, and she gathered the disciples to him and he sent them through the earth as messengers from God and he ordered them to convey from him (the message which) God had commanded him. Then God raised him to Himself and the disciples scattered where he commanded them. The Messiah's raising up was three hundred and thirty years after Alexander's conquest of Darius."

Al-Thalibi (Zemer's transl. in *THE MOSLEM CHRIST*, p. 101 ff.) adds a few more details of interest: the prediction of Simon's fall and his discussion with the Jews, the darkness that covered the earth at the time of the crucifixion, how the traitor Judas was given by God the likeness of Christ and was apprehended by the Jews to be nailed on the cross, how Mary was weeping at the foot of the cross mistaking Judas the crucified for her son and how Jesus appeared to her to inform her of her mistake . . .

Maqdisi (*Le Livre de la Creation*, vol. III, pp. 129 v.) was better informed, yet as we pointed out above, he records the opinions of the Jews and of the Christians without adopting them. Having mentioned the arrest of Christ in a cave where he was hiding with his mother and his disciples, Maqdisi continues: "Then they placed a crown on his head, put him to death and crucified him (*sic in ordine*), according to what both Jews and Christians say. The latter pretend that after the crucifixion God took up his soul to heaven; some among them affirm that only his bodily form was crucified whilst his spirit, which is God himself, rose to heaven. A Copt told me that Jesus had been put to death, crucified and buried, and that he had remained three days in the tomb, then his Father had delivered him and lifted him up to heaven. According to the Muslims, he was neither put to death nor crucified; it is another man who was made to undergo that torment, and the rumour was spread among the people that it was Jesus; hence the news went about in that form. God had said: "They did not kill him, they did not crucify him; but they were made to see his similitude" (Qr. 4/155) . . .

—*The resurrection and ascension.* These events are mentioned in traditional accounts of the life of Christ, but not commented upon. (1) The Muslim concept of Christ's Ascension into Heaven is very different from the Catholic one. For the Christian Christ's ascension is the triumphal crowning of his earthly life; Christ ascends to the Father of his own accord and by his own power. In the Muslim conception, the so-called Ascension is but a subterfuge—unworthy of God—by which Allah comes to the rescue of a persecuted Prophet, and kidnap him into heaven.

3. THE SECOND COMING

A. THE QUR'ANS Qr. 43|61; 4|159.

- 1. And truly he (it) is a knowledge towards the (Knowing of the) Hour; then do not doubt about it, and follow me: that is a right way (43|61).
- 2. And there is none of the People of the Book but will certainly believe in him before his death; and on the Day of the Resurrection he will be a witness against (over) them (4|159).

Commentary

- 1. *And truly he (it) is a knowledge towards the (knowing of the) Hour.*

This verse is commonly understood to refer to the Second Coming, of Christ but the meaning of the verse is so uncertain that it is difficult to make a convincing argument out of it.

There are at least two ways of translating the first part of the verse, and even then it is not clear to whom or to what it applies because the subject of the sentence is the pronoun *hu* (*wa innahu*). If the verse is in its proper original context, then *hu* should naturally stand for "Ibn Mariyam," the Son of Mary mentioned in the passage immediately preceding our verse, and it should be translated *he* as we did above. If however the verse is not in its original context as some seem to think (see R. Bell, *The Qur'an*, p. 495), then the pronoun *hu* may be translated by *it* as well as by *he*, and refer to a thing instead of to a person. The thing it may be referred to according to Baidhawi (*Tafsir*, Ed. Fleischer, vol. II, p. 241 end) is the Holy Qur'an, for, "in it are found the signs foreboding the Hour and the required proofs."

Another word which creates difficulty is the one we translated by "knowledge." The form 'LM—which in ancient Qur'ans must have been written without diacritical marks—may be read 'ilm (knowledge), or 'alam (sign). We have adopted the translation "knowledge" because the common Arabic reading of 'LM in the verse in question is 'ilm; but the translation *sign* found favour with many even to this day (Sale, Rodwell, Yusuf Ali).

Whatever these philological difficulties may be, most Muslim Commentators consider the verse to refer to Christ (for instance: Jalal, *Tafsir*, vol. II, p. 232; Nasafi, *Tafsir*, vol. IV, p. 93; Baidhawi, *o.c.* vol. II, p. 241) Jalal and Nasafi explicitly say that the pronoun *hu* stands for 'Isa, Jesus who will come to teach mankind about the coming of the Hour of Judgment; and so does Baidhawi. "His (Christ's) apparition or descent are conditions (signs) by which it can be known that the hour is at hand." From this description it seems immaterial whether the predicate of the pronoun *hu* be 'ilm (knowledge), or 'alam (sign), or even as some have proposed, *dhikr* (reminder).

Then do not doubt about it, viz. about the Hour of Judgment which will come one day.

And follow me. It is Muhammad that speaks to the people; it is he that must be followed. But it may also be Allah through his Messenger. Baidhawi (*o.c.* 241 ff) explains: "Follow me," that is, "my guidance, my law or my messenger; and it is said that the Prophet was ordered to utter this word."